Message Map 5 **Audience: Public** **Date Updated: 1/17/14** **Question or Concern: Do the added impaired water listings mean that water quality is getting worse?**		
Key Message 1 The impaired waters list **is not** a good measure of statewide water quality trends.	**Key Message 2** When a waterbody is added to the list, it **does not** necessarily mean the condition of the waterbody has recently gotten worse.	**Key Message 3** Overall water quality in the state is improving in many ways due to efforts resulting from the Clean Water Act, Wisconsin's Priority Watershed Program, and new approaches for controlling water pollution.
Supporting Fact 1-1 Changes in the number of listed waters can be driven by several factors, including changes in water quality standards, assessment methods and monitoring strategies.	**Supporting Fact 2-1** Factors such as the timeframes over which a waterbody was monitored and changes in the way DNR assesses waterbodies can result in listing status changes for a particular waterbody.	**Supporting Fact 3-1** Water quality trends have been both positive and negative at long-term river monitoring stations over the last 20 years.
Supporting Fact 1-2 DNR's surface water monitoring strategy intentionally **targets waterbodies that are suspected to be impaired**, which allows DNR to identify more waters needing restoration.	**Supporting Fact 2-2** Many impaired waters already have restoration plans in place, some of which are currently being implemented, but full restoration is not expected to occur in the near term.	**Supporting Fact 3-2** Phosphorus, ammonia and suspended solids (sediment) concentrations have decreased at a majority of long-term trend river monitoring stations. Nitrate and chloride concentrations have increased at a majority of long-term trend river monitoring stations.
Supporting Fact 1-3 Water quality standards are reviewed and may be updated every three years; assessment methods are reviewed and may be updated every two years. These updates can result in listing changes.	**Supporting Fact 2-3** Some impaired water restorations can occur over relatively short time frames (i.e. several years), but others can take decades to be fully achieved.	**Supporting Fact 3-3** Past efforts have reduced the amount of phosphorus from Wisconsin watersheds to the Mississippi River by about 23% and to Lake Michigan by about 27%.